March Comes in Like a Lion

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY UMINO CHIKA
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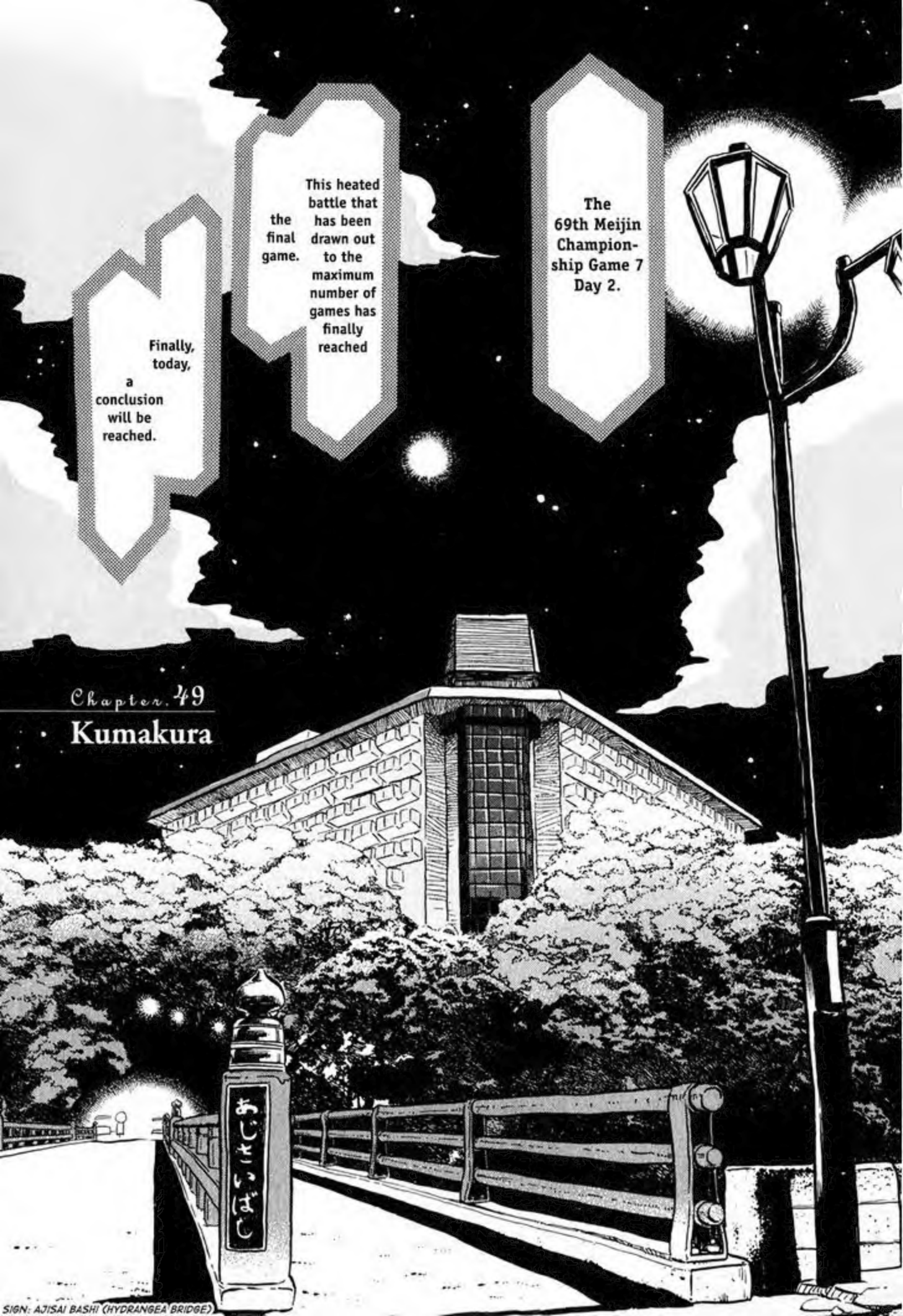
The 69th Meijin Championship Game 7 Day 2.
This heated battle that has been drawn out to the maximum number of games has finally reached the final game.
Finally, today, a conclusion will be reached.
Chapter. 49
Kumakura
あじさいばし
SIGN: AJISAI BASHI (HYDRANGEA BRIDGE)

THE CHALLENGER WHO HAS FACED SOUYA MEIJIN IN FOUR CONSECUTIVE CHAMPIONSHIPS, CLAIM THE TITLE?
OR WILL KUMAKURA KENGO 9-DAN,
WILL SOUYA MEIJIN MAINTAIN THE TITLE OF MEIJIN FOR THE FIFTH TIME IN A ROW, BRINGING HIS TOTAL NUMBER OF PERIODS AS MEIJIN UP TO ELEVEN?
AFTER THEIR DINNER BREAK, BOTH PLAYERS HAVE LITTLE AVAILABLE TIME LEFT,
YET BOTH HAVE LOOKS OF COMPOSURE ON THEIR FACES.

WELL...
THIS IS QUITE A SURPRISING MOVE.
TSUJII-SAN, WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENTATE?
WELL NOW...
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?
AH, AND HERE WE HAVE SOUYA MEIJIN'S MOVE.
△4-4 KAKU.
Hm...
SFX: SUH...
Tsujii 9-dan at the on-site demonstration board commentary room

I DON'T SEE ANY PARTICULAR POINT TO IT...
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S "HANDED OVER" THE MOVE.
—I WONDER WHAT HE'S THINKING WITH THAT MOVE.
HE DIDN'T GO WITH ☖3-7 KAKU PROMOTE... OR ☖3-7 RYUU...
I'M SURE SOUYA-KUN HAS BECOME UNSURE OF HIMSELF AS WELL...
—I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN.
IT'S LIKE SAYING "THERE YOU ARE, GO AHEAD AND THINK ABOUT THAT".
THAT'S BECAUSE THIS IS A FREE-FOR-ALL BATTLE.
MHM MHM...
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
SFX: BAAAN
FOR KUMAKURA 9-DAN, IT SHOULD BE A "DODGE MOVE" HERE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, RIGHT?
WAIT...
HM?
THIS MOVE...
I THINK THAT'S WHAT HE'LL PLAY SOON.
THEN, AT THE CURRENT STATE OF THINGS, DOES THAT MEAN THAT KUMAKURA 9-DAN... HAS THE ADVAN-TAGE?
Ohhhhhh
SFX: KIPPARI
SFX: BISHIIH

I SURRENDER.
HUH?!
AH...
A RESIGNATION?!
KUMAKURA 9-DAN RESIGNS!!
R...
Resigns?!
Huh... Hold on, just like that?!
SOUYA MEIJIN DEFENDS HIS TITLE!!
Hello!! It's a resignation!
Heeyyy cameras!
We don't even have an observer in there!
KUMAKURA RESIGNED!!
I TOLD YOU, HE RESIGNED!!
PLEASE HURRY!!
Where's the observer/ Nakamura-san?!
Hurry!!
Wah Wah
SFX: BATA BATA BATA
HUH?
HE RESIGNED?
HERE? JUST LIKE THAT?!
KUMAKURA-SAN, WHY?
AREN'T YOU BEING A BIT HASTY?
THERE ARE STILL MOVES YOU CAN... I MEAN, I'D THOUGHT YOU WERE CLEARLY IN THE LEAD...

IN EXACTLY 17 MOVES.
NO, HE'S MATED.
—but when you play it out, it's true!!
Nobody noticed it,
▲1-5 GYOKU.
There're no more moves he can play... No matter how he manoeuvres,
IT'S TRUE...
△1-4 FU. ▲1-6 GYOKU.
SOUYA PLAYED BRILLIANTLY.
everything's ineffective!!

I DIDN'T TRAIN ENOUGH.
THAT SAYS IT ALL.
ALL THERE IS TO DO NOW IS BATTLE MY WAY THROUGH THE RANK MATCHES FOR ANOTHER YEAR
IN ORDER TO SIT HERE AGAIN...
SFX: FURU FURU... (SHAKING)
HOW CAN HE BE SO COMPOSED?
Aw man... He's so freakin' cool.
HE JUST FINISHED A FREE-FOR-ALL MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GAMES!
I wanna have style like that!!!
K-Kuma-kura 9-dan!! He's giving me chills...
Aaahh!
Kengo sure is coool.
フルフル…
Is it confidence...?
He keeps making it through the den of demons that is the A-class rank matches,
starting over from the beginning every year,
and he says that
he'll be sitting there again next year...

SORRY I TOOK SO LOOOONG!
LONESOME
OKAY,
TONER AND MOIS-TURISER...
AND WHILE I WAS THERE, THEY BROUGHT OUT A NEW HYDRATING CREAM, SO I GOT THAT TOO.
YEAH.
THIS SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH.

SFX: TONN

SORRY.
IF I GO INTO PLACES LIKE THIS, I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP SNEEZING.
SEE YA.
THANKS A LOT.
YOU WANT ME TO COME WITH YOU?

SFX: BATAN
TO CENTRAL HOSPI-TAL.
I'LL GIVE YOU PROPER THANKS NEXT TIME.
.....
...BYE.
中央病院
SFX: BURORO...

HEY,
I'M HERE,

MISAKO.

LOVE ME
SFX: BATAMU
SFX: POOON
SFX: GAAAAAH
SFX: BURORO...

がしっ
ぐ
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ぉ
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す
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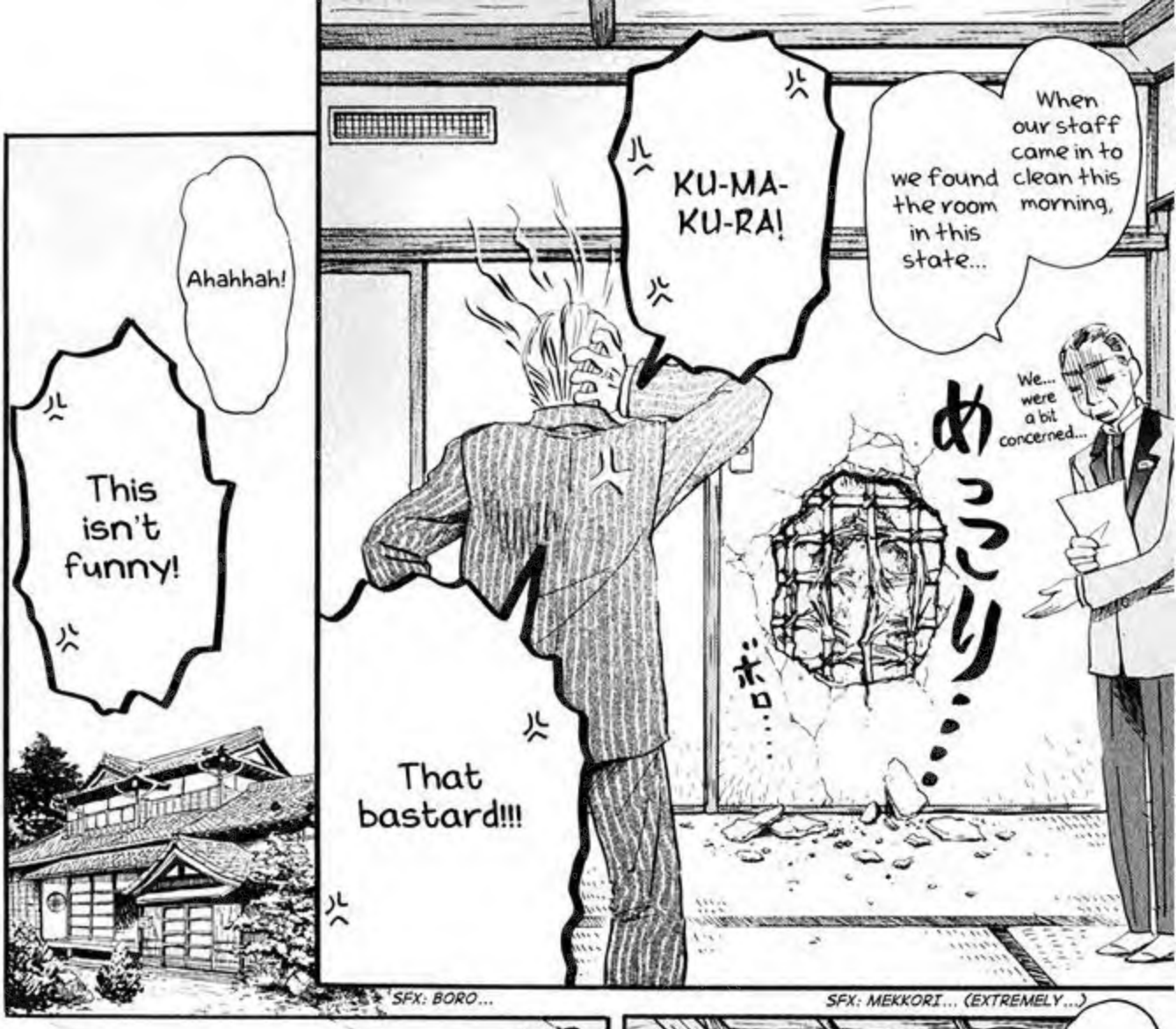
SFX: GUUU... GUUU...
There are
big bags under his eyes...
—He probably hasn't been sleeping well for a long while.
His face is pale.
.....
GEEZ...
—The next day...
after seeing his face like that...
I just can't get mad at him
YOU IDIOT!

and left Hakone behind him...
Kumakura 9-dan took the limited-express train first thing in the morning
...UM, PRESI-DENT... COULD I HAVE A WORD...
HM? WHAT IS IT?
!!
!!
レ??
SFX: IHH...



SFX: BORO...

SFX: MEKKORI... (EXTREMELY...)

And! Of course, he'll be paying for all of the repairs!
He'll be getting a whopping penalty!
—I SEE. SO HE KICKED THE WALL IN, HUUUH?
KUMA-CHAN SURE IS SOME-THING. Hahaha...

BUT HONESTLY,
KICKING IN A WALL AFTER YOU LOSE...
Haha...
THAT KUMA...
DURING THE SCORCHING-HOT SUMMER VACATION!
TO EVERY LAST SHOGI EVENT THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE ROOFS OF DEPARTMENT STORES
I'M GONNA SEND HIM
SFX: GATAN
...
SO IT DID
REALLY FRUSTRATE HIM, HUH?
OF COURSE, WHO WOULDN'T BE
FRUSTRATED AFTER THAT?
SFX: TOTON
Chapter 49 END